ALL HAT AND NO HEAD: FITTING RESEARCHERS AS IN(DI)VISIBLE SELVES

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ABSTRACT This article explores and complicates contemporary understandings of researcher subjectivity to argue that teachers and academics should, in both their practice and scholarship, embrace and emphasize the influence that their diverse roles and lived experiences have had, and continue to have, on their research and, most importantly, on themselves as researchers. Through critical self-reflection, I suggest that scholars should highlight their plurivocality in an effort to construct and convey a multifaceted, unified self.

"As teachers and as researchers, we wear many hats." The phrase, spoken by my professor during an introductory graduate course, echoes throughout most classrooms and corridors in any Faculty of Education facility. As a student, I have heard the same statement so many times that I actually began to envision my instructors donning bonnets and boaters, trilbies and toques. Indeed, as a current educator and researcher, I can attest to the multiplicity of shifting roles, responsibilities, and identities that both professions equally demand. Though I, myself, do not wear, and never have worn, a physical cap, I constantly sense the weight of wearing the various duties and expectations that I must perform.

Practitioners at all levels of education would agree that essential to embodying and fully exacting one's role(s) is constant reflection. John Dewey, philosopher, pedagogue, and educational reformist, posits reflection as a fundamental process of learning and development for both students and teachers (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009). He defines reflective practice as the active, careful, rigorous, deliberate, disciplined, imaginative, and participatory manner of thinking that demands serious, consistent consideration and interrogation of a specific object or notion (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006, p. 11). Dewey's formative writings have since foregrounded a commonplace need for metacognition, self-assessment, and critical self-reflexivity, especially in the field of Education. What I continue to contemplate is whether reflection serves to benefit the interests of one "hat" over another. Do we, as researchers informed by our professional practice, (in)directly privilege a particular mindset or persona when attempting to think critically about our own selves?

My studies in the fields of the Humanities and Social Sciences have taught me, above all else, that the subject of writing is the writing subject. That is, one's written expression, regardless of genre or format, reveals just as much—if not more—about the author as it does of the content that he or she chooses to research and explore. Ravitch and Riggan (2017) explain that one's own scholarly interests are shaped by personal curiosities, experiences, biases, passions, beliefs, social location, gender, class, ethnicity, and ideological

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The Journal of Reflective Inquiry strives to promote the exploration of research beyond traditional results-oriented academic publishing. Through publication, JORI invites learners to investigate the research process and its societal implications.

commitments, among other qualities (pp. 9-11). It is fitting, then, that, in social and educational research, reflexivity—the transformative process of turning back on oneself—is a common custom that foregrounds the layered nature of selfhood and introduces innovative ways to critique and (re)write the social through the self (Davies, 1999; Reed-Danahay, 1997). This pensive act, which focalizes the voice, knowledge, and experience of a highly visible practitioner (Hunter, 2012, p. 91), involves profound awareness of the reciprocal influence between researcher and his or her surroundings, a "self-conscious introspection" that is guided by a desire to better understand both oneself and others (Anderson, 2006, p. 382). Though reflexivity may traditionally denote a silent activity, one's critical thoughts can be conveyed both out loud and textual form as part of a "continual internal dialogue and evaluation of a researcher's positionality" (Berger, 2015, p. 220). One's adoption of reflexivity asserts the subjectivity of his or her work and the ineluctable fact that the researcher is thoroughly implicated in a chosen field (Atkinson, 2006, p. 402). The process challenges any claims of researcher objectivity, which remains a flawed, unrealizable ideal (Reed-Danahay, 2009, p. 30). The ultimate purpose of reflexivity, then, is to facilitate the critical examination of a researcher's positionality in the field of academic production - not to be any more objective or less subjective, but to both delineate and subvert the false distinction of the deceptive binary (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 119).

In an effort to capture and articulate the inherent plurality of their positionality, researchers might feel compelled to "write in role" - to reflect upon and communicate their experiences from a particular perspective. Though valuable and insightful, this process compartmentalizes the self, thereby filtering and reducing one's knowledge and "lived curriculum" through the lens of a selected hat. For instance, Galman (2009), in describing the benefits of arts-based self-study research, claims: "As a new teacher, and later as a novice educator, I separated the teacher self from the other parts of myself—the artist self, the mother self, and so on" (p. 147). Galman's approach is certainly not unique, but I question whether such a bifurcation, a division of self, is ever wholly possible. Is the artist ever removed from the teacher and vice versa? What does such a separation look like? How, does one know that he or she is acting, writing, researching, or reflecting from the standpoint of a specific role, free from the influences of other perspectives and positions? While concentrating on a portion of oneself is undoubtedly a productive and intimate manner of exploring one's subjectivity in detail, I argue that the approach runs the risk of pigeonholing and essentializing one's understanding, representation, and (public) perceptions of self. Taber (2011), writing on the tensions of numerous and often incompatible roles assumed within communities of practice, suggests that it is challenging for people to simply dissolve or abandon a constructed identity to project a refined version of themselves (p. 344). A practitioner's body, inclusive of the mind, then, should be understood not as a concrete thing that could be severed, but rather as a nuanced and evolving situation (Woodward, 2008, p. 543), which is always in a process of becoming. If we begin to appreciate the self as "continually under construction" (Davis, 1999, p. 26), it would be difficult to define with confidence what we are and, moreover, what we are not.

Since each person both embodies and exudes numerous identities in his or her professional and personal capacities (Bourdieu, 2000; Ellis & Bochnher, 2009), a practitioner becomes a living bricolage, whose various roles and personas overlap, intersect, and coalesce to create an intricate and "meaningful whole" (Muncey, 2005, p. 10). Researchers, like the phenomena that they examine and the conceptual frameworks formed to observe them, are interlinked, elaborate concepts filled with beliefs, values, and philosophical assumptions that together

provide a more comprehensive understanding of researcher as self (Jabareen, 2009, p.51). One's ongoing, convergent (in)formal learning, and ontological, epistemological, and axiological principles fosters this inherent multiplicity (Creswell, 2013; Tilley, 2016). This suggests that the self must be considered in its interconnected entirety, rather than in its dichotomized or disjointed partialness, especially in the context of critical reflexivity for educational purposes. Instead of disembodied members and minds, Taber (2012) argues that academics, researchers, and classroom teachers should be written and perceived as whole beings (hooks, 1994) - as fluid, intact entities who consider how research informs and is informed by the researcher's positionality and personal history (pp. 73-75). Thus, for Taber, the researcher cannot detach one element of his or her life from another because each is entwined and, to some degree, codependent. Here, I imagine a researcher balancing a delicate stack of hats on top of his or her head. Every hat, each with its own unique design, colour, and fit, represents a different identity or role that the individual carries—and lives—on a daily basis. Whether in the lab, in front of a classroom full of students, writing a journal article, or conducting observational fieldwork, the researcher must attempt to stabilize and keep a hold of the many interconnected hats which help construct the whole. Surely, if the researcher were to reach for and pull out only one hat to wear or display, the stack, like an unstable Jenga® tower, would soon topple to the ground.

If we continue to focus on identities as mere iterations or consequences of the researcher as self without considering the researcher as a holistic being, then it is possible that research itself will become "all hat and no head," especially since, even in qualitative studies, "it can be difficult to bring selves into research, particularly when much of academia frowns on it" (Taber, 2012, p. 77). While reflexively identifying with and concentrating on a single aspect of one's personal identity may afford an individual a degree of agency and empowerment in academe, the deliberate attempt to detach, decontextualize, or segregate identity from the unified researcher works to undermine the influence of personal, sociocultural, and temporal contexts in which the researcher is always a central participant (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 10). The search for a sense of situatedness in one's research may not yield a harmonious identity devoid of contradiction or complication—nor should it. The incongruent crossings may motivate one's academic interests, engender sites of productive struggle and conflict, and inspire researchers to critically reflect on themselves to evaluate how their collective identity is sculpted by and located in their respective milieus (Piper, 2015, p. 19). I am suggesting that the researcher as self, in reflexive practice, be a plurivocal mosaic rather than a fragmentation, that one's self-reflexivity focalizes how fractions or pieces of one's identity work with, instead of apart from, each other. If the holistic self, the foundation or "head" on which one's hats rest, continues to be broken or concealed from one's practice or scholarship, researchers as whole beings—as unified selves—might cease to exist; they may become fantasmic surrogates or proxies which merely represent, rather than truly personify, the essence of the researcher. With just hats, researchers may, in their written work, begin to become invisible, instead of indivisible.

To satisfy my desire to be a reflexive, whole researcher and to consider how to write both from and about numerous perspectives and (trans)formative life experiences, I have, in my own research projects on the potentially adverse effects of male homosocial desire in adolescent team sport, elected to pursue an analytic autoethnographic design (Anderson, 2006). At its most basic, this is a semi-autobiographical genre of qualitative research that demonstrates several layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the social and cultural (Ellis & Bocnher, 2000; Muncey, 2005). Analytic autoethnography, rooted in life

writing, invites a problematization of subjectivity as a means to make sense of complex, cultural phenomena, and to ultimately engage in a social critique, which begins with the researcher as participant (Reed-Danahay, 2009). While typically a formal methodology, autoethnography is approached by Taber (2012) as a theory, method, and lens through which one's positionality acts as a valid entry point into a specific research field (p. 82). Rather than compel researchers to choose a particular self-identity to present one's "embodied curriculum" (Lave, 2011) and findings, analytic autoethnography invites the researcher to be a "boundary-crosser" characterized by fluid, multiple identities that dissolve the simplistic "insider/outsider" dichotomy to better understand social influences (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 4). As Woodward (2008) notes, since researchers can never be completely inside or outside their topics of study (p. 547), the role of reflexive inquiry becomes increasingly important to question one's knowledge and background, and to ponder how one's own comprehensive positionality and situatedness both affect and are affected by the research being conducted. Autoethnographers, in short, are storytellers who, as essential parts of the tale which they are sharing (Anderson, 2006), must look forwards and backwards, evaluate trajectories and memories, to make meaning of their own narratives (Muncey, 2005, p. 3). Reflexivity, invariably tied to autoethnography, motivates a more inclusive, expansive view of who the researcher is, and why and how he or she researches.

Despite the benefits that critical self-reflexivity offers, for both the researcher and his or her field of study, subjectivity, although a powerful tool, is often unacknowledged or unexplored (Taber, Howard, & Watson, 2010). Méndez (2013) asserts that qualitative research projects and studies involving a strong emphasis on self, on researcher as participant, have been, and continue to be, criticized and undermined for being untruthful, untrustworthy, self-indulgent, narcissistic, introspective, and too individualised (p. 282). Autoethnographic lenses, regardless of their analytic underpinnings, are still challenged for their presumably unilateral approach to research that may pose certain threats to standards of content accuracy, validity, and ethics (Méndez, 2013, pp. 282-283). As teachers, we are asked—and expected—to reflect upon our daily practice on an ongoing basis, to contemplate and self-assess our performance in the classroom, and to draw from our life histories to augment our understanding of our students and, in turn, our instruction (Drake, 2010). Why, then, should research be any different? If the ultimate goals of both instructors and scholars are to further thought, to expand knowledge, and, indeed, to "educate," it seems only natural that researchers, as interconnected, sociocultural agents acting within the very fields that they intend to study, would need to stress, rather than to secrete, the significance of their subjectivity. While one's narrative need not dominate the landscape of social research, one's personal story, a form of social action in and of itself (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. 170), should be a central component around which the study is constructed. Since knowledge is socially produced, in studying the self, one studies the whole. Autoethnographers focus their "wide-angle research lens" outward toward society whilst looking inward to locate, and write of, the vulnerable self (Ellis & Bochner, p. 739).

As part of the new story of education, teachers are encouraged to use their own narrative as a cornerstone and inspiration for their daily practice in an effort to foster a learning environment that embraces individuality, safety, and inclusivity (Drake, 2010), and develops an understanding of mutual precarity, whereby solidarity with others is achieved through the recognition of the self as vulnerable (Butler, 2004). Equally essential to this dialectical shift is the curricular push for all students to engage in metacognition—an awareness of one's own learning and thought process—to inspire more effective, holistic self-assessment

and personal growth (Drake, Reid, & Kolohon, 2014). If we, as educators, want our students to truly value the power of reflection, to learn about the benefits of critical reflexivity, and to master the process of holistic self-assessment, then why are we as teacher-researchers hesitant to do the same in academe? Educators are implored to be lifelong learners, to lead by example, and to cultivate, within their own classrooms, inquiry-based learning which, in effect, posits students' own questions and curiosities as the bases for lesson and unit plans. Twenty-first century classrooms both normalize and foreground students' positionalities, needs, and interests, while developing the qualities and skills connected to analytical evaluation, creativity, and inquisitiveness. In short, we raise subjective, prospective researchers in the field of education but, due to academe's seemingly chronic pursuit of objectivity, fail ourselves and our students when we deny ourselves the opportunity to don our hats and share our stories in formal research. In my own work, I approach my field not simply as a student or a researcher, but as a teacher, coach, athlete, and citizen, too. It is important for me, and for readers, to understand that I am none of those people if I am not all of them at once. The indivisible interdependence of my roles, articulated through the reflexive elements of my analytic autoethnographic methods, has enabled me to research and to inquire about the self and the social not in part but, rather as a whole.

When, as part of my own research, I think critically about how to develop anticipatory, anti-rape education which aims, through pedagogy, to be proactive, nonviolent, and educative, rather than reactive, accusatory, and punitive, I must interrogate institutional phallocentric, essentialist thought and unlawful, dehumanizing conduct as consequences of boys' intimate interactions with their male, heterosexual peers and teammates. It is necessary, then, to consider how performative, homosocial relationships are taught, learned, and potentially unlearned during early adolescence: a (trans)formative period when a boy's relations with his counterparts are predicated on masculine status, most often demarcated by one's sexual experience and achievement with girls, regardless of consent (Flood, 2008). To do so, I engage in reflection and emotional recall (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), both of which position me in various contexts of lived experience, starting with the boys' locker room, where, in an effort to belong and to fit in with my peers, I engaged, unabated, in the construction and perpetuation of rape culture, the outcome of which validated my masculinity and cemented my status as an accepted member of my sportive community of practice. Because of my own regretful, transgressive demeanour as a student-athlete, I write, in response, from many roles and identities, all of which together wish to be informed agents who educate young males about the androcentric, misogynistic, and violent tendencies that male homosocial desire may reify. As hooks (1994) explains, "professors must practice being vulnerable in the classroom, being wholly present in mind, body, and spirit" (p. 21). Though I am not (yet) a professor, I would contend that hooks' claim is true also for researchers and K-12 teachers; one's (re)telling of a personal story, however controversial or shocking, may be an uncomfortable—but equally necessary—exercise in vulnerability, subjectivity, and reflexivity. My faithful accounts, like Taber's (2012), showcase my partiality, but not partialness, as a researcher, whose own experiences help to enrich my study.

Autoethnographic self-reflexivity reinforces the notion that I, the researcher as self and as participant, am my own most valuable, trusted, and dependable subject, from whom I may always draw information, inspiration, and concrete findings. I know, and will know, no one person more intimately and fully than myself. Through my current, qualitative research efforts, structured by critical self-reflexive inquiry, my whole being becomes a sociocultural text on which the human experience is written and conveyed; I write and share my narrative

while it continues to write me. Méndez (2013) notes that an important advantage to autoethnography is its potential to contribute to others' lives "by making them reflect on and empathise with the narrative presented" (p. 282). By starting my experience in my former high school locker room, and extending my research on male homosocial desire in educational settings to include my ongoing practices as both a coach and teacher, I continue to elicit a narrative which critiques the social through the multifaceted self, the effect of which, I hope, may inspire others to share their stories. Whether on the playing field, in the change room, behind a desk, in front of the classroom, or on social media, what is becoming increasingly clear to me is that my identity as a researcher both encompasses and transcends. My role as a researcher informs my daily thoughts and actions regarding my field of study but so do the several functions and positions that being a researcher invites. My perspective as a coach, for instance, both affects and is affected by my capacities as a teacher and athlete, each of which builds upon my seminal encounters as a young student. For me, it is impossible to isolate or detach a single role, as each influences the importance and necessity of the other. Such mutual, inter-reliance, however, creates a search for more parts of the indivisible self. As I reflect and look for additional, productive ways to share my complete personal journey, I cannot help but think: if, how, and when may we as researchers know that we are whole? How many hats will be enough?

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